

# Heartbeat Sutra

Jerod Sommerfeldt

# Heartbeat Sutra

for two instruments and video

copyright Jerod Sommerfeldt, 2014 (ASCAP)

“Oh, Sariputra, Form Does not Differ From the Void,  
And the Void Does Not Differ From Form.  
Form is Void and Void is Form.  
The Same is True For Feelings,  
Perceptions, Volitions and Consciousness.”

from the Heart Sutra

Personnel needed:

1. Two performers on instruments related to the treble clef and bass clef, respectively.
2. An engineer to run sound and video, maintaining acoustic balance between the electronics track and live performers.
3. Stage personnel to completely darken the hall at the beginning of the piece and return the lights to full at its conclusion.

Materials needed:

1. A projector, screen, and PA equipment (speakers, mixer, laptop) to facilitate stereo playback of a .mp4 file, supplied by the composer.
2. Two stethoscopes or heart rate monitors and two chronometers for the performers to track individual heart beats and overall time.
3. Stand lights for each music stand.

Performance considerations:

Each system of music – written in concert pitch – lasts for 30” in duration, thus each page in the score lasts for a total of 1’. A chronometer should be used to keep pace with the video and music, which have only a vague, indirect correlation to any gestures written in the instrumental parts. Counting silently is a preferred substitute, should following along with heart beats through a stethoscope be impossible.

Given that both internal heart beats are used for individual parts and systems of music last for 30”, there will be intentional fluctuations of timing for each player in relation to the other. Players should feel free to complete the piece at their own pace, provided that 4’ remains a goal for total duration.

The video lasts longer than the prescribed 4’, and will fade out at 4’05”. If the performers are not yet finished with the piece at that time, the piece will conclude by them in total darkness.

Notational considerations:

Numerals placed above note heads denote the number of heart beats to pulse or sustain for each respective note. Notes with dashed lines following them call for individual, repeated articulations in accordance with the prescribed number of heart beats and notes with solid lines that follow indicate sustained pitches, held for the called-for number of heart beats. Some moments in the score specifically call for freely changing octaves, but performers are welcomed to play any written pitch in any octave that they choose, especially those that are an octave below where written.

# Heartbeat Sutra

Jerod Sommerfeldt

The first system consists of two staves, Treble and Bass. Both staves begin with a box containing a five-note ascending scale: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. Above the Treble staff box is the instruction "repeat pitch gamut in order" and below it is "one note per heartbeat" and the dynamic *mf*. Above the Bass staff box is the instruction "repeat pitch gamut in order" and below it is "one note per heartbeat" and the dynamic *mf*. The Treble staff continues with a long note on D5, with a dynamic *p* at the start and *f* at the end. The Bass staff continues with a long note on G3, with a dynamic *f* at the start and *p* at the end. Both staves end with a note on D5 (Treble) and G3 (Bass) with a dynamic *mf*. Vertical bar lines are placed at the beginning of each staff and at the end of the system. The instruction "gradually becoming legato" is written above the Treble staff and below the Bass staff.

The second system consists of two staves, Treble and Bass. The Treble staff begins with a melodic line starting on G4, moving up to D5, then down to G4, and ending on D5. The Bass staff begins with a long note on G3, then moves to D3, and ends with a melodic line starting on G3, moving up to D4, then down to G3, and ending on D3. Dynamics are indicated with wedges: *f* in the Treble staff, *pp* in the Bass staff, and *sfz* at the end of the Treble staff. The instruction "gradually becoming legato" is written above the Treble staff and below the Bass staff.

3 5

*mp* *f* *pp* *fp* *mf*

3 freely switch octaves

*mf* *ff* *p*

*tr*

Detailed description: This musical system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note (labeled '3'), a quarter note (labeled '5'), followed by a sixteenth-note scale with a slur and a fermata. The dynamics for this staff are *mp*, *f*, *pp*, *fp*, and *mf*. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a quarter note (labeled '3') with the instruction 'freely switch octaves'. The dynamics for this staff are *mf*, *ff*, and *p*. A trill (labeled 'tr') is indicated at the end of the upper staff.

2 freely choose from pich gamut

*mf* *p*

6

*mf* *f* *p* *mf*

Detailed description: This musical system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a quarter note (labeled '2') with the instruction 'freely choose from pich gamut' and a dynamic of *mf*. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a sixteenth-note scale with a slur and a fermata, followed by a quarter note. The dynamics for the lower staff are *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*. A vertical bar line is present at the end of the upper staff.

5 8

*mf* *f* *p*

5 8 |

*pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mp*

Detailed description: This musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and features a whole note on the G line (5) with a dynamic marking of *mf*. At the 8-measure mark, there is a whole note on the G line (8) with a dynamic marking of *f*, followed by a dynamic marking of *p* with a hairpin indicating a decrease. The bottom staff is in bass clef and features a whole note on the G line (5) with a dynamic marking of *pp*, followed by a dynamic marking of *mf* with a hairpin indicating an increase. At the 8-measure mark, there is a whole note on the G line (8) with a dynamic marking of *f*, followed by a dynamic marking of *p* with a hairpin indicating a decrease. At the 11-measure mark, there is a whole note on the G line (1) with a dynamic marking of *mp*.

1

*pp* *mf* *ff*

2

*pp* *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and features a whole note on the G line (1) with a dynamic marking of *pp*. At the 8-measure mark, there is a melodic line starting on the G line (8) with a dynamic marking of *mf*, followed by a dynamic marking of *ff* with a hairpin indicating an increase. The bottom staff is in bass clef and features a whole note on the G line (2) with a dynamic marking of *pp*. At the 8-measure mark, there is a melodic line starting on the G line (8) with a dynamic marking of *mf*, followed by a dynamic marking of *p* with a hairpin indicating a decrease.

4 freely choose from pich gamut

5

4

5 freely choose from pich gamut

3

*mp* *f* *mp* *f* *p*

8

4

10

*f* *p* *mp* *p*